Binham Gauging Station, Warham, Norfolk.

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

May 2012

Client: Environment Agency / Royal Haskoning
OA East Report No: 1367
OASIS No: Oxfordar3-126956
NGR: TF 96000 41393
Binham Gauging Station,

Warham, Norfolk.

Watching Brief

CHER No. ENF129120

Date of Works: 8/5/2012

Report No: 1367

Excavator: Jonathan House BA

Client: Environment Agency / Royal Haskoning

Report Date: May 2012
Table of Contents

Summary......................................................................................................................................................5

1 Geology and Topography.........................................................................................................................7

2 Archaeological Background ....................................................................................................................7

3 Methodology...............................................................................................................................................7

4 Results........................................................................................................................................................8
   4.1 Groundworks.......................................................................................................................................8

5 Discussion and Conclusions....................................................................................................................8

6 Acknowledgements..................................................................................................................................9

Bibliography ...............................................................................................................................................10

Appendix A. OASIS Report Form ................................................................................................................11
List of Figures
Fig. 1 Site location map.
Fig. 2 Plan of groundworks.

List of Plates
Plate 1. Excavation of the trench through the river, taken from south-west.
Plate 2. Riverside embankment, looking towards Hale's Manor, taken from south-east.
Plate 3. Turf removed by machine bulldozer blade, taken from south-west.
Plate 4. Embankment groundworks, taken from north-east.
Summary

On the 8th May 2012, OA East carried out an archaeological watching brief at Binham Gauging Station, Warham, Norfolk (TF 96000 41393). The monitoring consisted of the observation of services trenches and the foundations of a kiosk. Much of the groundworks took place within an embankment of material likely formed by the occasional maintenance of the adjoining waterway. The deepest excavations occurred within a trench crossing the river and cutting the river bed. This trench was excavated into the natural gravels, however no significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered.
1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

1.1.1 The site is located on a tributary of the River Stiffkey, with the Stiffkey running to from south to north to the west of the site. As the site sits at the base of a shallow tributary valley there is a steady rise in the ground to the north-east and south-west.

1.1.2 Binham Road runs immediately to the south of the site broadly running north-west, south-east, between Warham to the north-west, and Binham to the south-east.

1.1.3 The site lies on Alluvium overlying Head (both of which can be composed of a mix of clay, silt, sand and gravel). The former is formed by riverine deposition, the latter is a quaternary deposit formed from the material accumulated by down slope movements. The bedrock is composed of Chalk (BGS; http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1.1 This section draws heavily from Specification for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording, Binham Gauging Station, Warham. OA East.

2.1.2 The site lies in the centre of an area of known and important archaeological remains relating to a number of periods (as identifiable through Norfolk Heritage Explorer http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk).

2.1.3 Principal amongst these are cropmarks of possible Roman enclosures, field systems and associated linear features (NHER27080 and NHER30410), within which the site lies.

2.1.4 Close by and to the east are also prehistoric monuments including a ring ditch or hengiform monument (NHE27074), and a further ring ditch (NHER11326) and to the southwest is a more well-known Bronze Age round barrow, west of Fiddlers Hill (NHER11283).

2.1.5 The site is also close to earthworks associated with the medieval Hale's Manor (NHER1886) that itself lies around 300m to the northwest, although earthworks that may relate to former gardens and other enclosures extend towards the subject site.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1.1 The objective of this watching brief was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

3.1.2 The Brief required that all below ground disturbance should be viewed under constant attendance.

3.1.3 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's pro-forma sheets. Locations of groundworks were recorded at appropriate scales digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
3.1.4 The weather did not inhibit the archaeological work, however the trench edges within the watercourse were very unstable and only available for a brief visual inspection, before backfilling took place.

4  R E S U L T S

4.1  GROUNDWORKS

4.1.1 Cross River Trench

A bucket width trench was excavated across the river, with the purpose to submerge and bury a ducting pipe below the river bed. The trench was excavated to the top of the bank on both sides of the river (see plate 1). The total depth of the trench from the top of the bank to its base, was approximately 2m. The conditions did not allow for a measured drawn section, as the trench was in the river, leaving the trench sides very unstable.

4.1.2 A visible raised embankment ran alongside the river on the south-west side, the trench formed a section through this material. The upper most layer within the bank consisted of a dark brown, very silty topsoil material, with frequent flint inclusions of varied size, this layer was recorded to a depth of 0.96m from the top of the bank; this deposit overlay the natural gravels. The ground conditions were very unstable, and was prone to collapse, suggesting the bank material was poorly consolidated and relatively uncompacted ground.

4.1.3 Kiosk, and trenches for services

A number of small trenches were excavated at the top of the river bank within the raised embankment for the provision of services and footings for a kiosk. All were dug into the topsoil, with the deepest excavation 0.55m partially cutting into a subsoil, a reddish brown, sandy silt. It was apparent however that the embankment may not be consistent in its make up, as an area of turf was removed accidentally by the machine bulldozer blade (see plate 3.), revealing flints likely deposited by water channel maintenance.

4.1.4 None of the interventions associated with these groundworks revealed the natural gravels, and no features were identified within the ground disturbance.

4.1.5 Finds

No finds were recovered from any of the groundworks.

5  D I S C U S S I O N  A N D  C O N C L U S I O N S

5.1.1 The river channel here is undoubtedly of man-made construction, and is present on the first edition map (http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html accessed: 10/5/12). Any natural precursor channel was not visible during the course of these works. Deposits within the immediate vicinity of the waterway are likely to be quite transient, between the necessary upkeep and maintenance and natural river processes. No indication of bank
construction was observed, and no dating material was recovered from the deposits. It is likely the current embankment material on which the majority of the groundworks impacted is of relatively recent date, and a result of the most recent episode of waterway maintenance. The presence of unsorted gravel and flints immediately below the turf as seen in Plate 3 would also suggest a recent deposition. However, without dating material the age and provenance of the embankment is not certain.

5.1.2 The circumstances of the project meant a close inspection of the deep section through the river was not possible, thus contributing very little understanding of the waterway construction and the deposits forming the channel bank.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

6.1.1 The author would like to thank Environment Agency and Royal Haskoning who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Paul Spoerry.

6.1.2 The brief for archaeological works was written by David Robertson.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Websites

British Geological Survey, (Online) Available at: http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain. Date accessed: 11/5/12

Norfolk Heritage Explorer, (Online) Available at: http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk Date accessed: 11/5/12

Old-Maps.co.uk, (Online), Available at: http://www.old-maps.co.uk/maps.html Date accessed: 10/5/12
APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

**Project Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OASIS Number</td>
<td>Oxfordar3-126956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Name</td>
<td>Binham Gauging Station, Warham, Norfolk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Dates (fieldwork) Start Finish</td>
<td>08-05-2012 08-05-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Work (by OA East)</td>
<td>No Future Work Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Reference Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Code</td>
<td>ENF129120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning App. No.</td>
<td>20090238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HER No.</td>
<td>ENF129120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related HER/OASIS No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Type of Project/Techniques Used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompt</td>
<td>Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Observation (periodic visits)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Excavation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvage Record</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Excavation (100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Field Walking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded Observation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic Metal Detector Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geophysical Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Operated Vehicle Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Pit Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-Area Excavation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvage Excavation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching Brief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods**

List feature types using the NMR Monument Type Thesaurus and significant finds using the MDA Object type Thesaurus together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monument</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select period...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select period...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Project Location**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>North Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>Warham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HER</td>
<td>Norfolk Landscape Archaeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area</td>
<td>75m2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Address (including postcode if possible)</td>
<td>Binham Road Warham Norfolk, NR21 ODQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Grid Reference</td>
<td>TF 96000 41393</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© Oxford Archaeology East Page 11 of 12 Report Number 1367
The monitoring consisted of the observation of services trenches and the foundations of a kiosk. Much of the groundworks took place within an embankment of material likely formed by the occasional maintenance of the adjoining waterway. The deepest excavations occurred for a trench crossing the river and cutting the river bed. This trench was excavated into the natural gravels, however no significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered.
Figure 1: Site location
Plate 1: Excavation of the trench through the river, taken from south-west.

Plate 2: Riverside embankment, looking towards Hale's Manor, taken from south-east.
Plate 3: Turf removed by machine bulldozer blade, taken from south-west.

Plate 4: Embankment groundworks, taken from north-east.
Head Office/Registered Office/ OA South

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: http://thehumanjourney.net

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net
w: http://thehumanjourney.net

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850599
e: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net
w: http://thehumanjourney.net